29. An apparatus for navigating a vehicle using a display unit as claimed in claim 26, wherein said display image control means displays the roads according to a predetermined display priority order for each rank of the roads, and said dots painting means paints the dots in any one of the same classes of colors as those to which the display order of one of the roads having a lowest priority order of the predetermined display priority order for each rank of the roads belongs.

30. An apparatus for navigating a vehicle using a display unit as claimed in claim 29, wherein the predetermined display priority order is the order of freeways, national highways, regional principle roads, principle roads, and street roads.

31. A method for navigating a vehicle using a display unit, comprising the steps of:

a) storing a road map data related to a road map in a predetermined storing means;

b) detecting a present position of the vehicle;

c) setting a destination the vehicle is desired to reach on the road map;

d) setting a start point of location on the road map at which the vehicle is to start on the basis of the detected present position of the vehicle;

e) setting a route of travel on the road map from the start point to the destination set; and

f) displaying on a display image screen of the display unit the image of the road map surrounding the set route of travel; and

g) operatively transforming a coordinate system of the road map surrounding the set route of travel into a form of a bird's eye view such that the bird's eye as a viewing point is referenced at a predetermined position on a raised plane from said road map and offset in a direction opposite to the set destination with respect to the present position of the vehicle, and the road map surrounding the set route of travel being displayed to appear to a user as looking down over the road map from the bird's eye;

h) detecting whether at least one hairpin curve is present preceding the current position in the set route of travel at a location which is in a direction opposite to the set destination with respect to the present position of the vehicle as the reference; and wherein, at said step g), the image of the set route of travel to be displayed on the display image screen of the display unit is controlled in the form of the bird's eye view so that the viewing point of the bird's eye view is moved from the predetermined position toward a direction opposite to the present position of the vehicle with respect to the detected hairpin curve so that the road map surrounding the set route of travel is viewed including the detected hairpin curve.

32. A method for navigating a vehicle using a display unit, comprising the steps of:

a) storing a road map data related to a road map, the road map data including road network image data and character data related to the road map;

b) detecting a present position of the vehicle;

c) setting a destination of the vehicle is desired to reach is set on the road map;

d) setting a start point of location on the road map at which the vehicle is to start on the basis of the detected present position of the vehicle;

e) setting a route of travel on the road map from the start point to the set destination; and

f) displaying on a display image screen of the display unit the image of the road map and the character data surrounding the set route of travel; and

g) operatively transforming a coordinate system of only the road map image data surrounding the set route of travel into a form of a bird's eye view such that the bird's eye as a viewing point is referenced at a predetermined position on a raised plane from said road map and offset in a direction opposite to the set destination with respect to the present position of the vehicle, and the road map image data only surrounding the set route of travel being displayed in a perspective view to appear to a user as looking down over the road map from the bird's eye and the character data being displayed as plane data without the coordinate transformation to the bird's eye view and being displayed at a constant size regardless of a position of the display image screen with respect to the present position of the vehicle.

33. An apparatus for navigating a vehicle using a display unit, comprising:

a) road map storing means for storing road map data related to a road map, the road map data including road network image data and character data related to the road map;

b) vehicle position detecting means for detecting a present position of the vehicle;

c) vehicle destination setting means through which a destination the vehicle is desired to reach is set on the road map;

d) start point setting means for setting a starting point location on the road map at which the vehicle is to start based on the detected present position of the vehicle;

e) route of travel setting means for setting a route of travel on the road map from the starting point to the destination set; and

f) display control means for controlling an image of the road map surrounding the route of travel set which is displayed on the display unit in a form of a bird's eye view such that the bird's eye as a viewing point is referenced at a predetermined position on a raised plane from said road map and offset in a direction opposite to the set destination with respect to the present position of the vehicle, and the road map surrounding the set route of travel is being displayed to appear to a user as looking down over the road map from the bird's eye, said character data being overwritten on the road network data displayed on the display unit in the bird's eye view, the superposition of the character data on the road map or the superposition of the road map on the character data being changed depending on a height position of the road map image on an image screen of the display unit with respect to a lowest position of the display unit.

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